

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, September 9, 1879

Letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his Father. Cambridge, Mass., September 9th, 1879. Dear Papa:

Your telegram received. I spoke by telephone to the Telephone Company this morning and find that they are preparing to make you an offer for the Canadian Patent. I told Mr. Vail that I had just heard you were in negotiation with the Dominion Telegraph Company and Jay Gould — and asked what had better be done. He said — “Telegraph to your father to do nothing till he has time to hear from us.” I accordingly sent you per Atlantic and Pacific and Dominion Line — the following message. “Make no arrangement about Patent until you hear from Bell Telephone Company. They mean business. Shares fetch three thirty-seven.” Mr. Vail says that the Company will make a proposition to you that he thinks will be mutually satisfactory. It will do no harm if you can manage to get a counter proposition from Jay Gould or the Dominion Company — without fettering your free action. I have no doubt that at the present time — while people are wild about Telephone shares — that you and Williams could realize at least two hundred thousand dollars if you don't seem to anxious to make a sale. The great thing — I think — is to get some interest shown in the matter by Jay Gould and the Dominion. In that case I am sure you will get all you want and more out of the Bell Telephone Company. I would not commit myself if I were you to the Dominion. Trade with the Bell Telephone Company — if possible — 2 as it might put me in a very awkward predicament in case of Canadian Law-suits. I might have to testify against our own Company unless they withdraw opposition from Canada. I will let it be known that all the influence that I and Mr. Hubbard can exert upon the Stockholders will be used to defeat any agreement with the Western Union if some plan is not agreed upon by which you shall be no sufferer in Canada. If the Bell Telephone Company can agree with you about Canada then all my influence and Mr. Hubbard's will be cast in with that of the

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other stockholders. Don't therefore be too anxious to close with the first offer of the Bell Telephone Company — whatever it may be — until you have sounded the Dominion as to what they would be willing to do.

I sold two hundred shares for Mabel yesterday at three hundred dollars a share which places us in possession of \$93,000 in addition to the \$12,000 received from the English Telephone Company. We have still left 600 shares left which we could sell to-day at \$337 per share so our remaining American stock is worth over \$200,000.

With love, Alec.